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Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 DOTE-00 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03

H-03 RSR-01 /089 W
---------- 130918
R 191822Z JUL 73
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6387
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ETRN, GW, UK, FR
SUBJECT: CIVAIR: FRG ELIMINATION OF AFFINITY CHARTERS

REF: A) STATE 136846; B) BONN 9693

1. SUMMARY: THE EMBASSY MADE STRONG REPRESENTATIONS ON THE CONTINUATION OF AFFINITY CHARTERS AS INSTRUCTED IN REFTEL (A) ON JULY 18. FRG REPS SAID THAT THE US VIEWS WOULD BE TAKEN UNDER CONSIDERATION, BUT THEY DID NOT SEE ANY REAL POSSIBILITY THAT THE FRG WOULD REVERSE ITS DECISION TO ELIMINATE AFFINITY CHARTERS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1973. THE FRG EXPERIENCE WITH ADVANCE BOOKING CHARTERS IS VERY SATISFACTORY AND THEY CONTINUE TO REGARD AFFINITY CHARTERS AS DIFFICULT TO ENFORCE AND DISCRIMINATORY. THE HOPE WAS EXPRESSED THAT SOME COMMON POLICY ON CHARTERS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC COULD BE WORKED OUT FOR 1974 IN LINE WITH THE OTTAWA DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY CIVIL AIR ATTACHE MADE REPRESENTATIONS TO THE FRG ON JULY 18 ON THE CONTINUATION OF AFFINITY CHARTERS THROUGH NOVEMBER 1974 IN ACCORDANCE WITH
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REFTEL (A), DRAWING ALSO ON THE BACKGROUND MATERIAL IN

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STATE 133084. THE FRG REPS, PAAS AND NIESTER OF THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT (FMT), NOTED THE USG POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE FRG DECISION TO DISCONTINUE AFFINITY CHARTERS ON DECEMBER 31, 1973, AND PAAS SAID HE WOULD PRESENT THESE VIEWS TO HIS SUPERIORS FOR FINAL COMMENT. HE LEFT NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT FRG FEELS STRONGLY ABOUT ITS POLICY AND BELIEVES IT IS SHARED BY OTHER MAJOR EUROPEAN STATES, PARTICULARLY THE UK AND FRANCE.

3. PAAS STATED THAT CONTRARY TO US, EXCELLENT EXPERIENCE HAD BEEN GAINED WITH ABCS IN FEDERAL REPUBLIC. HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT AFTER THE FRAUDULENT OPERATION OF MANY AFFINITY CHARTERS IN THE PAST ACTIVE PROMOTION OF THE ADVANCE CHARTER CONCEPT WOULD GREATLY FACILITATE ENFORCEMENT FUNCTIONS OF AVIATION AUTHORITIES IN VIEW OF THE SHORTAGE OF AVAILABLE STAFF. PAAS FELT THAT A FIRM GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE IN FAVOR OF ADVANCE BOOKING CHARTERS, WHETHER THEY BE ABCS OR TGCS, WOULD GO FAR TO ENCOURAGE TRAVEL ORGANIZERS TO PROMOTE THIS MARKET, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY KNEW THEY HAD TO CONCENTRATE ON ONE TYPE OF CHARTER OPERATION.

4. PAAS AND NIESTER MADE REPEATED REFERENCE TO THE OTTAWA DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND RECALLED THAT THE INTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS LEADING TO THE NEW ADVANCE BOOKING CONCEPT HAD BEEN BASED ON THE DESIRE OF ALL PARTICIPANTS TO HAVE A COMMON SYSTEM ON BOTH SIDES OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC. THEY QUESTIONED THE USEFULNESS AND VALIDITY OF A CONTINUATION OF AFFINITY CHARTERS BY ONE PARTY, CONTRARY TO THE OTTAWA CONCEPT.

5. NIESTER ADDED THAT THE IMMINENT NEGOTIATIONS OF CONTRACTS FOR THE 1974 TRAVEL SEASON HAD MADE A RESTATEMENT OF THE FRG DECISION TO THE CARRIERS (REFTEL B) IMPERATIVE. THE FRG'S PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO DISCONTINUE AFFINITIES AND ONLY PERMIT ABC'S HAD LED AGENTS, AT LEAST IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, TO MAKE CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENTS INTO MARKETING THE NEW CONCEPT. FROM REPORTS RECEIVED SO FAR, THE FMT DOUBTS THAT GERMAN-ORIGIN CHAR-
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TER TRAVEL TO THE US WILL SUFFER AT ALL AND EVEN ORGANIZERS REPRESENTING THE LARGEST GROUPS OF ETHNIC TRAVEL ARE CONVERTING TO THE NEW SYSTEM. THE FMT'S NEW APPLICATION FORMS FOR ABC CHARTER OPERATIONS HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY CARRIERS AND CHARTERERS. AFTER FURTHER EXPERIENCE, THESE FORMS MIGHT BE SIMPLIFIED.

6. PAAS SAID HE COULD IMAGINE THAT SOME PREVIOUS FRG

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AFFINITY GROUP CUSTOMERS WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIS CATE-
GORY OF CHARTER RETAINED, PRIMARILY BECAUSE NO MINIMUM
RATES WERE INVOLVED, BUT UNLESS PEOPLE WERE FORCED TO
EXPERIMENT WITH THE ADVANCE CHARTER CONCEPT, NO MEANING-

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INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 DOTE-00 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03

H-03 RSR-01 /089 W
---------- 130881
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FUL EXPERIENCE COULD BE GAINED. THEREFORE PAAS COULD
NOT SEE HOW THE FRG COULD REVERSE ITS DECISION ON THE
DISCONTINUATION OF FRG-ORIGIN AFFINITY CHARTERS. HE
WONDERED WHAT PROCEDURAL STEPS THE USG MIGHT HAVE IN
MIND TO RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES IN POLICY FOR 1974;
THIS SHOULD BE DONE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, HE SUGGESTED,
IN THE INTERESTS OF THE CHARTER MARKET.

7. AT A JULY 13 LUNCHEON WITH THE CAA, DR. PLANK AND
MEYER OF LUFTHANSA'S COMMERCIAL POLICY DEPARTMENT, ALSO
MENTIONED THE RECENT CAB ACTION ON AFFINITY
CHARTERS. THEY SAID REPEATEDLY THAT BOTH LUFTHANSA AND
CONDOR SUPPORTED THE DISCONTINUATION OF AFFINITY CHAR-
TERS EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 31 BECAUSE OF THEIR FAVORABLE
EXPERIENCE WITH ABC CHARTERS DURING THE PRESENT SEASON
AND SALES TALKS UNDERWAY FOR 1974. THEY REPORTED THAT
"SCHWABEN INTERNATIONAL", THE LARGEST FRG ORGANIZER

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OF ETHNIC TRAVEL, WAS CHANGING OVER TO ABCS. EVIDENTLY THEY WANTED TO SHOW THAT EVEN THE TRADITIONAL USERS OF AFFINITY CHARTERS COULD FIND WAYS TO ADAPT TO THE ADVANCE BOOKING IDEA.

8. COMMENT: EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WILL BE DIFFICULT
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INDEED FOR THE FRG TO CHANGE ITS DECISION ON AFFINITIES. THE FMT IS FULLY AWARE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF DIVERSIONS OF TRAFFIC TO NEARBY COUNTRIES, BUT AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT DOES NOT SEEM CONCERNED. FROM REMARKS BY BOTH THE FMT AND LUFTHANSA THERE IS CONSIDERABLE CURIOSITY AS TO POSSIBLE US INTENTIONS EITHER WITH RESPECT TO A TIGHTENING OF AFFINITY RULES, OR TO AN ALTERATION OF OUR ADVANCE BOOKING CONCEPT, BUT WHICH IN EITHER CASE MIGHT OPEN THE WAY FOR A COMPROMISE SOLUTION.
HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AVIATION AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 JUL 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973BONN10316
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730724/aaaaarhy.tel
Line Count: 191
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 A) STATE 136846; B) BONN 9693
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08-Aug-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <11-Sep-2001 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR: FRG ELIMINATION OF AFFINITY CHARTERS
TAGS: ETRN, GE, UK, FR, AFFINITY CHARTERS
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

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